

Chapter 71 Design Review

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11-71-1: **Purpose**

This Chapter establishes objectives, standards, and procedures for conducting [Design Review \(DR\)](#). These regulations shall be carried out in a manner that encourages creative and appropriate solutions while avoiding unnecessary delays in project approval. The specific purposes of Design Review are to:

- A. Ensure that the proposed development plan will be in compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance.
- B. Ensure high quality development and encourage development options that are designed in an aesthetically pleasing manner and incorporate public spaces that are integral to the project.
- C. Achieve goals, objective, and policies of the comprehensive plan, sub-area plans, and other policies adopted by the [City Council](#).

11-71-2: **Applicability**

- A. [Design Review](#) shall be required for development proposals including the following:
 - 1. Buildings 4 or more stories in height.
 - 2. Multiple-residence and attached single residence projects that exceed the standard density of the [RM-2](#) density range.
 - 3. Mixed-use, commercial and/or industrial projects that have frontage on an arterial or collector street or that are part of an existing or planned development that has frontage on an arterial or collector street.

4. [Mixed Use](#), commercial and/or industrial projects that have, or will have, greater than 20,000 square feet of gross floor area.
 5. Modifications to existing commercial or industrial projects having frontage on an arterial street or that are part of an existing or planned development having frontage on an arterial street that involve:
 - a. A change in the distinguishing traits or primary features of the use of a building or land as evidenced by increased parking requirements, change in occupancy designation, change in outside storage, or other features.
 - b. The predominant primary architectural features or materials of existing buildings, such as changes to horizontal or vertical elements of exterior walls, building trim, roof shape or composition, detailing, building height or roof line, and parapets. Such review is limited to the specific architectural building features proposed for modification.
 6. Parking garages.
 7. Municipal projects of the [City of Mesa](#), including fire stations, libraries, parking lots with over 50 spaces, and any building or facility meeting the above height, size, or location criteria set forth above. Projects not subject to [Design Review](#) include streets, walls and fences, well sites, and road widening.
 8. Review of proposed alternatives to aesthetic-related design standards when specified as a review option to the design standard stated by this Ordinance.
- B. [Design Review](#) may be required, at the option of the decision making authority, in conjunction with any of the following:
1. As a condition of approval included in any ordinance adopting a Rezoning or attached to the approval of a [Council Use Permit](#), or
 2. As a condition attached to the approval of a [Special Use Permit](#), [Development Incentive Permits](#) (DIP), or [Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit](#) (SCIP) by the [Board of Adjustment](#), [Zoning Administrator Hearing Officer](#), or [Planning & Zoning Board](#), whichever is applicable.
- C. [Design Review](#) is not required for individual, detached single-family residences.

11-71-3: **Application Requirements**

Applications for DR shall be filed with the [Planning Division](#) in accordance with the application procedures in [Chapter 67](#), Common Procedures.

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11-71-4: Public Notice

In addition to notice required for public meetings, additional Public Notice shall be provided for all projects subject to [Design Review](#) by mailing notice to all property owners within 300 feet of the exterior boundaries of the property at least 15 days prior to the [Design Review Board](#) work session or public meeting.

11-71-5: Procedures

- A. **Staff Review Applications.** Following submittal of a complete application with the required fees, review of [DR](#) applications shall be completed as follows:
1. Notice of [DR](#) applications shall be mailed in accordance with [Section 11-71-4](#).
 2. New applications requiring [DR](#) approval shall be distributed to the [Design Review Board](#) for input and direction by the Design Review Board members at a work session prior to staff action on the proposal.
 3. Following input received by the Design Review Board members at the work session, staff shall approve, approve with conditions, return the application for modification, or deny the request. Prior to taking final action, the [Planning Director](#) shall notify any citizens who have expressed interest in the application and provide them the opportunity to review and comment on the final plan.
 4. The applicant may request further review by the Design Review Board during the staff review process. The applicant may also appeal staff decisions to the next available [Design Review Board meeting](#).
- B. **Design Review Board Applications.** Those applications requiring [Design Review Board](#) action shall be processed based on the procedures described in [Chapter 67](#), Common Procedures.
- C. **Appeals of Planning Director Design Review Decisions to the Design Review Board.** Any appeal of a [Planning Director](#) decision regarding a [Design Review](#) application shall follow the procedures described in Chapter 77, Appeals.

11-71-6: Review Criteria

- A. **Review Criteria.** When conducting [DR](#), the [Planning Director](#) and the [Design Review Board](#) shall be guided by whether the project satisfies the following criteria.
1. The project is consistent with:
 - a. Applicable goals, objectives and policies of the general plan and any applicable sub-area or neighborhood area plans;

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- b. All of the development standards of this ordinance;
 - c. Other adopted Council policies, as may be applicable; and
 - d. Any specific conditions of approval placed on the zoning of the property.
- 2. The overall design of the project including its scale, massing, site plan, exterior design, and landscaping will enhance the appearance and features of the project site, the street type, and surrounding natural and built environment.
 - 3. The overall design will create a distinctive and appealing community by providing architectural interest in areas visible from streets, sidewalks, and public areas.
 - 4. The project site plan is appropriate to the function of the project and will provide a suitable environment for occupants, visitors, and the general community.
 - 5. Project details, colors, materials, and landscaping, are internally consistent, fully integrated with one another, and used in a manner that is visually consistent with the proposed architectural design and creates a safe, attractive and inviting environment at the ground floor of buildings on sides used by the public.
 - 6. The project is compatible with neighboring development by avoiding big differences in building scale and character between developments on adjoining lots in the same zoning district and providing a harmonious transition in scale and character between different districts.
 - 7. The project contributes to the creation of a visually interesting built environment that includes a variety of building styles and designs with well-articulated structures that present well designed building facades on all sides, rooflines, and building heights within a unifying context that encourages increased pedestrian activity and promotes compatibility among neighboring land uses within the same or different districts.
 - 8. The project creates visual variety and relief in buildings and avoids a large-scale, bulky, or box-like appearance.
 - 9. The streetscapes, including street trees, lighting, and pedestrian furniture, are consistent with the character of activity centers, commercial districts and nearby residential neighborhoods.

10. Street frontages are attractive and interesting for pedestrians and provide for greater safety by allowing for surveillance of the street by people inside buildings and elsewhere.
 11. The proposed landscaping plan is suitable for the type of project and site conditions and will improve the appearance of the community by enhancing the building and site design; and the landscape plan incorporates plant materials that are drought-tolerant, will minimize water usage, and are compatible with [Mesa's climate](#).
 12. The project has been designed to be energy efficient including, but not limited to, building siting, and landscape design. The project also mitigates the effects of solar exposure for users and pedestrians. For purposes of this criterion, buildings that meet environmental standards such as [LEED™](#), [Green Globes](#), or equivalent third-party certification are considered to be energy efficient.
- B. **Conditions of Approval.** To achieve the purposes of the [DR](#), the [Planning Director](#) or [Design Review Board](#) may impose reasonable conditions to achieve the review criteria in paragraph (A), above and ensure land use compatibility, including one or more of the following:
1. Modification to building articulation;
 2. Modification to or additional landscaping;
 3. Modification to the height of structures to achieve design objectives;
 4. Walls, fences and screening devices;
 5. Noise attenuating construction; or
 6. Any other restriction necessary to provide compatible development with adjacent properties, preserve neighborhood character, or mitigate adverse environmental impacts.

11-71-7: **Minor and Major Modifications**

- A. After approval of a project, subsequent modifications of the approval may be granted by the [Planning Director](#), when it is determined that the modifications are minor, such as minor dimensional changes and building configurations. Such requests shall be made in writing and be accompanied by the required fee.
- B. Any modification that is considered a major modification by the [Planning Director](#), such as changes in uses, densities, or other major changes, shall be considered a new

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application, subject to the procedures described for new application in this Section for [Design Review](#).

11-71-8: **Appeals**

[Design Review](#) decisions by the [Planning Director](#) and the [Design Review Board](#) are subject to the appeal provisions of [Chapter 77](#), Appeals.

11-71-9: **Lapse of Approval; Modifications; Renewal**

[Design Review](#) approvals are effective and may only be extended or modified as provided for in [Chapter 67](#), Common Procedures.